

LETTERS  
TO  
6,  
DR. PRIESTLY,  
IN  
ANSWER  
TO THOSE HE ADDRESSED TO THE  
JEWS;  
INVITING THEM TO  
AN AMICABLE DISCUSSION  
OF THE EVIDENCES OF  
CHRISTIANITY.

---

BY DAVID LEVI,  
AUTHOR OF LINGUA SACRA, THE CEREMONIES OF THE JEWS, &c.

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שקר הנביאים נבאים בשמי לא שלחתים ולא צויתים  
ולא דברתי אליהם

JEREM. xiv. 14.

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## Advertisement.

*THE AUTHOR of the following sheets, sincerely hopes, that the Reader will view the undertaking with a candid eye; and not construe any part thereof, as reflecting upon what may be called true Christianity. What he has advanced, is, in support of a religion given by God himself; (although some Christians think, that it is no longer acceptable to him) and that, not till after a SOLEMN INVITATION, from an eminent Divine and Philosopher to the whole nation, as a preliminary step towards their conversion. The Author, (who is a sincere inquirer after truth,) has in consequence thereof, accepted the invitation, in order to convince, or be convinced, if PERMITTED to proceed in the inquiry.*

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AN INTRODUCTORY LETTER. Page 1

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*Of the present dispersion of the Jewish nation.*

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*Of the divine Mission of CHRIST compared  
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### E R R A T A.

Page 8, line 20, after Jews, read *This*.

10, l. 16, read *and*; ditto 17, read *of*.

19, l. 12, after them, r. *For I do*.

22, l. 1, after prophet, r. *For we*.

23, l. 21, for *contained*, r. *confisted*.

29, l. 23, after and, omit *a*.

65, l. 20, for *prophane*, r. *profane*.

67, l. 16, for thought *not*, r. *not thought*.

81, l. 19, for *is*, r. *are*.

56, Last Note, for *Dr. Prideaux*, r. *See Prideaux*.

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## An introductory Letter.

REV. SIR,

THE perusal of your Letters addressed to the Jews, (put into my hand by a worthy friend) hath afforded me much satisfaction, to find so able a Divine and Philosopher, acknowledge the *unity* of God; and who, at the same time, thinks there is some merit in the persevering faith of the Jewish nation, in “the promises of God, notwithstanding the most discouraging appearances.”

But this, Sir, is no more than our duty, and what we inherit from the great patriarch Abraham, from whom we are descended; for of him it is recorded, “And he believed in the Lord, and he counted it to him for righteousness\*.” And therefore,

\* Genesis xv. 6.



having so bright an example continually before us, we cannot, without being highly culpable, and rendering ourselves utterly unworthy the attention of the Supreme Being, entertain the least doubt of his Justice and Equity. And, as all the calamities that were to befall our nation, in consequence of our transgressing the LAW, as foretold by that great prophet\*, and divine legislator, Moses†, have been fulfilled in all respects; consequently, those great and glorious promises also foretold by the same prophet‡, must likewise have their full completion.

But the exact time of this accomplishment is not known to any, save the eternal God himself; as Moses, speaking in

\* He is emphatically styled, by way of eminence, by the Jewish writers, אֲדֹנָי הַנְּבִיאִים; that is, The Lord, or Master of the Prophets.

† Levit. xxvi. 14, &c. and Deut. xviii. 15, &c.

‡ “ And yet for all that, when they be in the land of their enemies, I will not cast them away, neither will I abhor them, to destroy them utterly, and to break my covenant with them: for I am the Lord their God.” Levit. xxvi. 44.

the

the name of God, emphatically expresses it in his prophetic poem, Deut. xxxii. 34. “*Is not this laid up in store with me, and sealed up among my treasures ?*” that is, it is as secret from all eyes, as the contents of a letter before the seal is broken. And in nearly the same sense, does the prophet Isaiah express himself. “*I the Lord will hasten it in his time\*.*”

These prophecies, Sir, are our consolation in this long, and dreadful captivity, and have been our support, in enabling us to bear up against the many grievous and miserable persecutions, we have suffered from both *infidels* and *Christians*. And hence it is demonstrable, that the calculators of the time of the coming of the Messiah, (and which, they say, must have been elapsed many centuries ago; and therefore, exult over us, as if God had totally cast us off, and there was no hope left for Israel,) have been most egregiously mistaken, as will be clearly shewn here-

\* Isa. lx. 22.

after,

after, in answer to your fourth letter : for as you have invited our nation to an amicable discussion of the evidences of Christianity, I shall endeavor to answer what you have advanced in behalf of your doctrine, as far as the extent of my abilities, and the little time I have to spare from my other avocations, will permit, as most of our learned men, (as I am informed) have declined the invitation ; and that, as I understand, for two reasons : first, on account of the aversion which the elders of our community have towards any of their body entering into religious disputes, for fear, that any thing advanced by them, might be construed as reflecting on, or tending towards disturbing of the national religion, as by law established. This hath always, hitherto, been studiously avoided, by all those of our nation, in all parts of their dispersion ; for we endeavor strictly to abide by the admonition of the prophet\*, as may be observed by the form  
of

\* And seek the peace of the city, whether I have caused  
you



of prayer composed for the Royal Family\*. Second, the generality of our learned men being foreigners, are deficient in the proper idiom and phraseology of the English language; consequently, are not able to enter the lists against so spirited and elegant a writer.

These, Sir, are the reasons. As to the first, I think it groundless: for although they might justly have been apprehensive of the consequence of such disputes in the dark ages of Popery, when, on the least surmise, or most groundless accusation, (as the crucifying† of children, &c.) thousands were massacred in England. And, in the reign of Henry the Third, their chief synagogue in London was taken from them by the King, and given to the *Friars Peni-*

you to be carried away captive, and pray unto the Lord for it: for in the peace thereof shall ye have peace. Jer. xxix. 7.

\* See the Ceremonies of the Jews, by the Author, published by Parsons, No. 21, Paternoster Row, page 51.

† Vide *Anglia Judaica*, page 11, 12, 13, 116, 136, &c.

*tents,*

tents, on a most extraordinary complaint exhibited against them by the said *Friars*, viz. “ *That they (the Friars) were not able to make the body of Christ in quiet \**,” for the great howlings the Jews made there during their worship †. Yet, ought they not at present, to entertain any such apprehensions, thanks be to God, the Reformation, and glorious Revolution. Besides, we live in an enlightened age, in which the investigation of theological points is accounted laudable ; and so they really are, if not carried to a licentious height. Nay, had it not been for this laudable spirit of inquiry, entertained by the first Reformers, all the reformed churches would still have been sunk in

\* Vide *Anglia Judaica*, page 192.

† The learned Author of *Anglia Judaica*, justly observes, that the true state of the case was, “ That those locusts were situated in the Old Jewry, and having but a small dark chapel belonging to their Friary, thought the Jews fine synagogue, which stood next to it, would be more convenient for them ; and therefore (after the example of their brethren of St. Anthony) begged it of the King, and furnished him with that reason for it.” Ibid.

gross ignorance, and Romish superstition ; and have groaned under the yoke of Papal tyranny : consequently, nothing can be more commendable, than a fair and candid inquiry after truth. For which reason, I am free to assert, that their fear in this case, is entirely groundless ; and their reason for declining the discussion on that account, of no force.

But, as to the second reason, I think it is of great weight ; and therefore, can only say, in the language of little David, “ Let no man’s heart fail because of him ; thy servant will go and fight with this Philistine.” And, although it may be said, in regard to this, (as Saul did to David) “ Thou art not able to go against this Philistine ; for thou art but a youth, and he a *man of war*\* from his youth.” To which I answer, in the language of the little champion, “ Thy servant slew both the lion† and the bear§ : and this uncir-

\* In literature. † Dr. Prideaux. See the Ceremonies of the Jews, by the Author, sold by Parsons, page 252, &c.

§ Hutchinson, &c. See *Lingua Sacra*, article אלה.



circumcised Philistine shall be as one of them. For "he cometh against me with a sword\*, and with a spear†, and with a shield§; but I come in the name of the Lord of hosts‡."

But to drop the allegory, permit me, Sir, to ask you, whether you sincerely intend, in this discussion, to defend Christianity? For your doctrine is so opposite to what I always understood to be the principles of Christianity, that I must ingeniously confess, I am greatly puzzled to reconcile your principles with the attempt. What! a writer that asserts, that "*the miraculous conception of Jesus does not appear to him to be sufficiently authenticated, and that the original gospel of St. Matthew did not contain it*||," set up for a defender of Christianity against the Jews! is such an inconsistency, as I little expected to meet with in a Philosopher, whose sole pursuit hath been in

\* Elegance of diction.

† Criticism.

§ Sophistry.

‡ Simple truth.

|| Letter IV. page 40.

search of truth. Might I be so happy as to bring him acquainted with it, I should then think my pains well rewarded: at any rate, I shall endeavor to speak conformable to it. I must however acknowledge, that you are pleased to declare, in plain terms, that you\* *do not believe in the miraculous conception of Jesus; and that you are of opinion that he was the legitimate son of Joseph.* After such assertions as these, how you can be entitled to the appellation of a Christian, in the strict sense of the word, is to me really incomprehensible. But, whether you are hearty in the cause, or no, I mean to confer, and reason freely with you on the subject, and candidly consider your arguments; but not with a view of converting either you, or any other Christian, to the Jewish faith, I assure you. No, Sir, we never attempt it; for we do not think ourselves bound (as the Christians) to propagate our religion, either by arguments, or persecution; nor

\* Letter IV, page 41.

(like the Mahometans) by the sword. On the contrary, we think, that conscience ought to be free; and therefore, leave every person at liberty to judge for himself; and this, I may alledge, as a third reason, in favor of those of our nation declining the discussion, as no REAL benefit is *likely* to accrue from it. For if you, and the other writers of your sect, have not been able to convince those that account themselves Orthodox Christians, of the *true unity* of God; nor they you, of the *divinity* of Christ, how shall a simple Jew, (who is perhaps despised by both) be able to convince either? This would be the highest degree of presumption, and which none of our nation are ambitious of meriting. No Sir, while we are destitute of the most *convincing*, and *persuasive* arguments in favor of Judaism, viz. fat Bishopricks, Deaneries, Rectories, and Vicarages, we must not expect it. And, we are really so far from pursuing the spirit of conversion, or coveting proselytes, that  
when



when any one is desirous (of his own accord) to embrace Judaism, we endeavor to deter him from his purpose, by representing to him the consequence of his design. For thus is it laid down by Maimonides\*; when a person is willing to become a profelyte, and strict inquiry being made concerning him, and no (sinister) cause found, they question him thus: What is it that moves thee to become a profelyte to Judaism? Dost thou not know that Israel at this time, is subject to *woe*, and are *hurried, expelled, and devoured* by all nations; and that *afflictions* are continually coming on them? &c. They also inform him of the punishment he becomes liable to for transgressing the commandments; as DEATH for prophaning the sabbath; *excision* for eating forbidden meats, &c. Hence it is manifest, that we not only faithfully point out to him the strictness of

\* Yad Hachazakah, Sepher Kedushah, Hilchoeth Eefurea Beeah, or, forbidden marriages. See also Lingua Sacra, by the Author, article נגזר.

our law, but also an exact picture of what he is to expect in temporal matters, in thus joining himself to a nation labouring under oppression, misery, and almost universal contempt. All which, fully demonstrates, how inclinable we are towards converting any to our religion. But do not think, Sir, that this proceeds from our unwillingness, that others should be partakers of the heavenly bliss, annexed to the due performance of the Mosaical dispensation; but from a just and liberal way of thinking, and the universal CHARITY we are taught to live in with mankind in general: for it is the unanimous opinion of our Rabbins, that the LAW OF MOSES, is obligatory on those of our nation only: for as we entered into a covenant with God to keep his law, and commandments, we, consequently, are bound to the due performance thereof. But that, we hold not to be the case of the rest of mankind; for, if they do but keep the law of nature, that is, the seven precepts  
of

of the sons of Noah, or Noachides\*, we maintain, that they thereby perform all that God requires of them, and will certainly by this service, render themselves acceptable to him. And, it is such as conform to these rules, that we call חסידים, אומות העולם, the pious of the nations of the world; and who will be partakers of eternal life. Maimonides on Repentance, Chap. III.

Thus, Sir, you may perceive, that we do not think our religion obligatory upon ALL mankind; nor the only infallible one to salvation; as every other Religion and Sect that I have hitherto heard of, esteems itself. With these just, and noble sentiments, inculcated into me from my earliest youth, it must be obvious to every impar-

\* These precepts are as follows: First, Not to commit idolatry. Second, Not to blaspheme. Third, To appoint and constitute just and upright judges: that justice may be maintained, and impartially administered to all. Fourth, Not to commit incest. Fifth, Not to commit murder. Sixth, Not to rob, or steal, &c. Seventh, Not to eat a member of a living creature.

tial



tial and liberal mind, that I do not aim at the conversion of Christians to the Jewish faith; as I do not think such *knight errantry* incumbent upon me, or necessary to the salvation of mankind.

But as I think it proper, that I should declare what is my aim in this undertaking, I shall, without ceremony, proceed to inform you, that it is twofold.

First, to clear our nation from the obloquy which they have laboured under for upwards of seventeen hundred years, viz. the charge of crucifying the Lord and Saviour of the world, as the orthodox Christians hold; or a prophet that was sent to them in the first instance, as you are pleased to assert.

Second, That as you seem engaged in the laudable pursuit of truth, I would willingly assist you therein to the utmost of my power, by throwing such lights thereon, as may be a furtherance thereto. In the mean time, with my most earnest supplications

plications to the Suprême Being, that he  
may be pleased to illuminate your mind in  
the pursuit of truth,

I am, Sir,

Your most obedient humble servant,

DAVID LEVI.

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## LETTER I.

*Of the present Dispersion of the Jewish Nation.*

DEAR SIR,

YOU tell us (page 12, of your letters) that “ our present dispersed and calamitous  
 “ situation, is certainly a proof that we  
 “ are at this very time under the divine  
 “ displeasure : that we ought to examine  
 “ what is the real cause of it, and make  
 “ it our business to remove it.” So far we agree. But, when you observe, (page 16,) that we ought “ to consider that a  
 “ captivity of seventy years only, without  
 “ any peculiar hardships during the continuance of it, were deemed sufficient  
 “ punishment for *all* our offences committed before that period ; whereas we  
 “ have



“ have experienced unspeakably greater  
 “ calamities, and of much longer conti-  
 “ nuance, since the promulgation of  
 “ Christianity, than the amount of all our  
 “ sufferings previous to it.” And also,  
 with great *sincerity* and *equal* affection  
 observe, “ that, according to appearances,  
 “ there is no other cause of God’s anger  
 “ against us, besides our rejection and per-  
 “ secution of the prophets of our own  
 “ nation, Christ and the apostles, who  
 “ were sent to us in the first place, and  
 “ who confined their instructions to our  
 “ nation, till being rejected by us, they  
 “ were directed to preach to the Gentiles.”

You also observe, (page 13, as I suppose  
 in confirmation of the preceding quota-  
 tions) “ that many of the prophets of  
 “ God were cruelly treated, and cut off,  
 “ by our forefathers, as our scriptures  
 “ testify. But their descendants repented  
 “ of this, as we read in the books of Ezra  
 “ and Nehemiah.” I must tell you sincere-  
 ly, that you have attempted to mislead your

readers, under the appearance of sincerity and good will ; and that, by jumbling truth and falshood together in such a manner, as not to be easily separated by persons of ordinary capacities ; and which are what the bulk of a nation generally consist of. For, first, as to our calamities being unspeakably greater, and of longer continuance, since the promulgation of Christianity, than the amount of our sufferings previous to it, I grant\* : and so must every candid and impartial person, who is but in the least acquainted with the history of the Jews, in this, or any other of the Christian nations, where they have sojourned ; and which is one great argument with me, against Christianity's being the peaceable kingdom of the Messiah, as foretold by the prophets†, in thus persecuting God's chosen and peculiar people, as you yourself allow them to be, (not to mention the blood that hath been spilt among Chris-

\* Except in the time of Antiochus Epiphanus.

† Isai. xi. 6, 7, 8, &c. and Micah, iv. 3, 4, &c.

tians, in persecuting each other;) and yet, we do not bear so great a dislike to Christians, nor so great an abhorrence of their faith, as you seem to insinuate, (page 2.) although, were we like some who call themselves Christians, we might entertain such sentiments, considering the many cruel persecutions we have suffered under them; and notwithstanding that their doctrines are so contrary to the fundamental principles of our religion, yet do we not abhor them. I must freely confess, that those doctrines do not *teach*, or *authorize* them to shed the blood of Jews. No, Sir, we carefully distinguish between the doctrine, and its professors: and, though we have suffered such cruel persecutions from Christians, yet, thanks be to God, and the Reformation, we now enjoy many privileges and immunities in the several Christian states in which we are settled, as our ancestors were strangers to in their dispersions. For this, we are not ungrateful; but, in return, pray for the prosperity of the state, as men-



tioned in my introductory letter. So much  
for OUR ABHORRENCE OF THE CHRIS-  
TIAN FAITH.

Second, as to the cause of our present captivity, and which you impute to our rejecting and persecuting of the prophets; that is, Christ and his apostles, I freely assert to be ill founded; for, whether Christ was the second person in the Trinity, as Christians in general hold, or only a prophet, as you and the rest of your sect affirm: I say, in either case, he could not be sent to us in the *first* place; nor could we receive him, without being hostile to the laws of Moses, as also to God, who was the author of them, as acknowledged by both Jews and Christians. For if he came in the former character, and the doctrine which he preached, was intended to maintain that absurd and corrupt tenet, it would be an unanswerable argument that his doctrine never came from God, it being impossible that God should contradict himself: for hath he not  
expressly

exprefsly told us himfelf in the fecond commandment, THOU SHALT HAVE NO OTHER GODS BEFORE ME\*. This, I think, muft neceffarily fignify, if there be any meaning in language, ONE SUPREME INTELLIGENT BEING, endued with all poffible perfection, power, wifdom, knowledge, and goodnefs. And, agreeable to this juft, rational, and fundamental doctrine, Mofes has, in the moft folemn manner, endeavored to inculcate this moft important truth, in the following words: *Hear, O Ifrael, Jehovah our God is ONE Jehovah.* Deut. vi. 4.

These, befides numberlefs other paffages in the Old Testament, make it plain, that we could not receive Chrift in the firft character, without a breach of the covenant eftablifhed between God and our nation. And, if in the fecond character, that is, as a prophet, we likewise could not receive him: for, in the firft place, he was deficient in the effential character of a

\* Exod. xx. 3.

prophet.

prophet. We do not find it recorded, that Christ prophesied in the name of God, as it is expressed by all the other prophets from Moses to Malachi, (who was the last). As the Lord spake unto Moses, &c. And, as soon as Joshua succeeded Moses, we find immediately, *that the Lord spake unto Joshua, the son of Nun, &c.* Josh. i. 1. The same of Samuel, Isaiah, and all the rest. But as to Jesus, we only find, *that he went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel, and healing all manner of sickness, and all manner of diseases*; whether by art, deception, or supernatural power, is not my business at present to enquire: freethinkers may, perhaps, say, it was something like a spiritual mountebank; but I have only to observe, it was not like a prophet endued with the spirit of prophecy.

And the Evangelist Matthew calls the whole discourse, which takes up the fifth and sixth chapters, a sermon, not a prophecy. The same we find in Mark, i. 21. *And straightway*



*straightway on the sabbath day, he entered into the synagogue and taught.* Again, ver. 38. *And he said unto them, Let us go into the next towns, that I may PREACH there also. And he PREACHED in their synagogues, and cast out devils.* The same in Luke. *And he preached in the synagogues of Galilee.* Luke iv. 44. also v. 1. and vi. 20, &c. As to John, he seems clear in the opinion of his divinity, (chap. i. 1, 2, 3, &c.) though he afterwards describes him as a teacher only, (chap. vii. 14.) *Now about the midst of the feast, Jesus went up into the temple and taught.*

Nay, more, he even preached himself, as *the light of the world.* Ibid. viii. 12. This, I think, is an instance not to be paralleled in scripture; for the duty of a prophet consisted, in his delivery of God's word or message to the people, whether it contained of reproofs, a calling to repentance, or denouncing judgment upon them for their disobedience; not in presumptuously preaching himself,  
but,

but, on the contrary, was always delivered as coming immediately from God, viz. *Thus saith the Lord*\*, *Then the word of the Lord came*†, &c. or, *The hand of the Lord was upon me*†. Again, we meet with the same example in John, xiv. 6. where Jesus preaches himself. From all which, it is manifest, that he was not sent by God to us as a *prophet*, seeing he was so deficient in the essential character of a prophet. As to the apostles, I think, they were less intitled to the appellation of prophets; for they only gave themselves up *continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word*. Acts vi. 4. And Philip *preached Christ*. Ibid. viii. 5. The same of Saul. *And straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he was the Son of God*. Ibid. ix. 20. The same of Paul, who is called an apostle of Jesus. 1 Cor. i. 1. The same in 2 Cor. i. 1. Gal. i. 1. Eph. i. 1. Col. i. 1. 1 Tim. i. 1.

\* Isai. xxxvii. 6, &c. † Jer. i. 4, &c.

† Ezek. xxxvii. 1, &c.

2 Tim. i. 1. Tit. i. 1. The same of Peter. See his first epistle, i. 1. and second epistle, i. 1. See also the second and third epistles of John, where he calls himself an *elder*, &c. From all which, it is manifest, that they were not entitled to the appellation of prophets.

Secondly, if we compare Jesus with the rest of the prophets, who succeeded Moses, from Joshua to Malachi, we shall find such a manifest contradiction between him and them, as fully demonstrates, that both parties could not be the messengers of God, as God never contradicts himself. For Moses says, in Deut. iv. 2. *Ye shall not ADD unto the words which I command you, neither shall ye DIMINISH ought from it, that ye may keep the COMMANDMENTS of the Lord your God, which I commanded you.* This, all the succeeding prophets were commanded to enforce; and which, the last of them did, in a most clear and explicit manner; at the same time closing his prophecy therewith, as intimating thereby,

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that



that that was the ultimatum of prophecy. *Remember ye the law of Moses, my servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb, for all Israel, with the statutes and judgments*§. But Jesus acted in direct contradiction to the law of Moses; for, whereas, the law of Moses expressly commands the adulterer and adulteress to be put to death. *And the man that committeth adultery with another man's wife, even he that committeth adultery with his neighbour's wife, the adulterer and the adulteress SHALL SURELY BE PUT TO DEATH\**. Now, Jesus, in defiance of this express command, rescues the *adulteress* from the just punishment due to her crime†; and that, by one of the most extraordinary devices that ever entered into the mind of man; and which, had it been pursued by all other legislators, would speedily have led to the entire subversion and annihilation of all law and good order; for if none were

§ Malac. iv. 4. \* Levit. xx. 10. † John viii. 3, 4, 5, &c.

to be admitted as evidence in a court of justice against criminals, but the immaculate, villany would soon stalk triumphant, and carry all before her with impunity; but this, thanks be to God, hath never been adopted.

Again; the law of Moses commands, that, *When a man hath taken a wife, and married her, and it come to pass that she find no favour in his eyes, BECAUSE HE HATH FOUND SOME UNCLEANNESSE IN HER, then let him write a bill of divorcement, and give it in her hand, and send her out of his house.*

Deut. xxiv. 6. This woman, so divorced by the law of Moses, was allowed to marry again, as well as the man, verse 3. whereas Jesus says, that, *Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth ADULTERY against her.* Mark x. 11. The same of the woman, verse 12.

And the prophet Jeremiah, at the express command of God, enforces the due observance of the sabbath; and in particular, that they have bear no bur-

den on the sabbath day. *Thus saith the Lord, Take heed to yourselves, and bear no BURDEN on the sabbath day.* Jer. xvii. 21, 22. But Jesus, in direct contradiction to this command of *his father*, by the mouth of his prophets, ordered the man who had the infirmity thirty and eight years, (and whom he cured on the sabbath) *to take up his bed and walk.* John v. 8. Such glaring contradictions against the commandments of Moses, committed by Jesus, could by no means suffer our nation to acknowledge his divine mission; nor accept him as a prophet, when he acted so diametrically opposite to Moses, and the rest of the prophets; consequently, the charge you have brought against us, (page 17, of your letters), “That there is no cause of God’s displeasure against us, besides our rejection, and persecution of the *prophets* of our own nation, Christ and the apostles,” I freely assert to be ill founded; for by the criterion they have here been  
 tried,



tried, it is manifest, that they were not  
 entitled to the appellation of prophets,  
 consequently we cannot be punished for  
 what we were not guilty of; for as they  
 were not *prophets*, we could not, accord-  
 ing to the justice of God, be punished for  
 rejecting, or persecuting them; and that,  
 for so many hundred years. Whether the  
 generality of Christians have just reason  
 to pay divine honors to Jesus, or not, as you  
 observe, (page 4,) is not my business at pre-  
 sent to enquire, but ought to be settled  
 among Christians themselves; and that, (if  
 I may presume to give my opinion in so  
 weighty a cause) before you attempted to  
 convert the Jews to Christianity. For do but  
 figure to yourself, dear Sir, how ridiculous  
 it must appear, for you to invite the Jews to  
 embrace, what you yourselves do not rightly  
 understand. This, is such an absurdity,  
 that I am surprized and astonished, when  
 I reflect, how it was possible that a Divine  
 and a Philosopher, of your distinguished  
 rank, in the republic of letters, should  
 overlook.

overlook. But if I am not greatly mistaken, I verily believe, that the honor of Jesus, or the propagation of Christianity, are things of little moment in your serious thoughts, notwithstanding all your boasted sincerity. If I have erred, I beg of you to bear with me ; for it is the love of truth that obliges me to speak out: and that I have just cause for entertaining this opinion, will appear clear to every candid and impartial mind. For in your postscript, (page 54,) you argue thus : “ If, “ therefore, it be in your power to persuade a heathen, that God really spake “ to your ancestors by Moses, by the force “ of exactly similar arguments, you ought “ to acknowledge, that the same great “ Being spake by Christ and the apostles : “ and on whatever principles you reject “ the evidences of Christian miracles, any “ person will be justified in rejecting those “ on which the truth of your own religion rests.”

Here we may perceive the compleat  
deist,

deist, under the most Jesuitical argument ; for if God spake to Moses, why not speak to Jesus ? and therefore, if you will not believe that God spake to Jesus, I will not believe that he spake to Moses. Now, therefore, you must either believe *both*, or I will believe *none*. For if you say that of Jesus is false, I say that of Moses is false also. *Ergo*, both are false.

As to what you assert, (page 13,) “ But  
 “ their descendants repented of this ;”  
 that is, the persecutions of the prophets,  
 “ as we read in the books of Ezra and  
 “ Nehemiah.” And from which, I suppose, you would infer, that, as they had so solemnly repented of the persecutions of the prophets, and had “ the return of  
 “ God’s favor in consequence of it,”  
 our present dispersion cannot be owing to any other crime ; i. e. the persecution of the prophets, but what was subsequent to it ; is, of the same tenour as the other parts of your letters, viz. the blending of truth and falsehood together, in such a manner,

as



as not to be easily separated. That they fasted and prayed, I grant, but not for the sin of persecuting the prophets; for no such thing is to be met with in Ezra, or Nehemiah, as I shall clearly prove.

The first fast is recorded in Ezra, viii. 21. and which was to seek a right way for them in safety from their enemies. *Then I proclaimed a fast there at the river Abava, that we might afflict ourselves before our God, to seek of him a right way for us, and for our little ones, and for all our substance. For I was ashamed to require of the king a band of soldiers and horsemen, to help us against the enemy in the way, &c.* As to the mourning, praying, and exhortation to repentance, which we have recorded in the 9th and 10th chapters of Ezra, that was entirely on account of the strange women which they had taken; but not one word in the whole book concerning their repentance for “the persecuting, and cutting off, of the prophets.” As to Nehemiah, we find, in the ninth chapter, an account of  
of

of a fast, and repentance ; and also a confession of God's goodness, &c. The former seems (as in Ezra) also in consequence of strange women ; and the latter, a general confession of God's goodness to the nation, from the call of Abram, to that day ; in which the slaying of the prophets is just mentioned in general terms, among all the other crimes which they had been guilty of, and which was the cause of the dreadful afflictions brought on their fathers, kings, princes, priests, and prophets, as well as themselves. All which, is a demonstration of the fallacy of what you have advanced.

I shall now attempt to point out the real cause of our present captivity ; and in which, will be demonstrated two propositions, viz. First, that this present captivity is a continuation of the Babylonish captivity ; and secondly, that in consequence thereof, we suffer for *the sins* of our ancestors ; and, “ That a captivity of  
 “ seventy years only, without any pecu-

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“ liar

“ liar hardships during the continuance  
 “ of it,” (Letter II, page 16,) WAS NOT  
 deemed sufficient for all our offences com-  
 mitted before that time ; as will be fully  
 evinced, from the following prophecy,  
 when clearly understood : the true know-  
 ledge of which, would have prevented you  
 from being so hasty in attempting to confute  
 Rabbi Isaac therewith ; or having adduced  
 it in support of the doctrine concerning the  
 Messiah, (Letter IV, page 36, 37, &c.) to  
 which it hath not the least tendency.

The prophecy: \* *Seventy weeks are deter-  
 mined upon thy people, and upon thy holy city,  
 to finish the transgression, and to make an end  
 of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity,  
 and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and  
 to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to  
 anoint the most holy. Know therefore and  
 understand, (that) from the going forth of  
 the commandment, to restore and to build Je-  
 rusalem, unto the anointed prince, (shall be)*

\* Dan. ix. 24, &c,



*seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. And after threescore and two weeks shall the anointed be cut off, and not to him\* : and the city and sanctuary shall be destroyed (by) the people of the prince that shall come; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined. And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week : and half the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations, he shall make (it) desolate, even until the consummation, and that (is) determined, shall be poured upon the desolate.*

This prophecy, which you, and a number of others have laid such stress on, as pointing out the precise time of the coming of the Messiah, I shall fully demonstrate, hath not the most distant reference to that event.

\* This is the real sense of the Hebrew לִי יִאֵן, as will be shewn in the explanation.

And, for the better explanation of the prophecy, it is proper, that we attend a little to the context. In the preceding chapter, it is observed, that when Daniel was informed of the vision of the two thousand and three hundred days, he sought for the meaning; but not rightly comprehending it, he judged, that that great number, was a flat contradiction to the word of God, as delivered by Jeremiah, concerning the redemption at the end of seventy years\*; and from thence concluded, that the captivity was prolonged, on account of the sins of the nation. This doubt arose, from a deficiency in his understanding, (of the prophecy,) and therefore, the angel said unto him, *I am now come forth to give thee skill and UNDERSTANDING.* For there is nothing else necessary to remove this doubt from your breast, but the proper understanding of the truth of the vision. And,

\* Jerem. xxv. 11, 12. and xxix. 10.

as to the expression, *At the beginning of thy supplications the commandment came forth*, that was to inform him, he was not to imagine, that on account of his prayer, God had changed his purpose, and in consequence thereof, commanded the redemption; but that as soon as he began to pray, and God saw his perplexity, in consequence of the weakness of his understanding, the royal command went forth from him, that he should come to him, to make him understand the truth of those matters that were to come to pass in future time. And as the angel Gabriel had explained to him the second vision, from whence his doubt arose, it was incumbent on him to perfect the explanation: and this is what is meant by the expression “*to shew*,” i. e. as I began the explanation; the commandment was, that I should finish it.

And the word *רְמוּזָה* *Chemudoeth*, which the angel uses, does not denote *beloved*, as in the English translation, but *desire*. The  
sense



sense of which is, for as thou greatly desirest, and affectest to understand hidden things, be not therefore perplexed, but *understand the matter, and consider the vision*: and the *matter* here mentioned, is the prophecy of Jeremiah, which is above mentioned in verse the second. And the *vision*, is that which he had heard, of the *two thousand three hundred days*. He, therefore, mentions each specifically, and desires him to understand them distinctly; for then all his doubts would be removed; all which was fully explained to him, in what the angel observed in the *seventy weeks*, &c. But, before I proceed to the explanation, it is proper, that I should shew in what manner, the answer agreed with the intent of the question; and the reason of his making mention of *weeks*, and not years, or times, as in the other visions.

It appears clear to me, (as the learned Abarbanel has observed,) that Daniel, from the words of Jeremiah, perceived,  
that

that God would visit all the nations, and punish them ; as may be observed from the following prophecy\* : *For thus saith the Lord God of Israel unto me, Take the wine cup of this fury at my hand, and cause all the nations, to whom I send thee, to drink it.* He then mentions, first, Jerusalem ; afterwards the King of Egypt, the Kings of Uz, the Philistines, Edom, Moab, and the children of Ammon ; the Kings of Tyre and Sidon, and all the isles beyond the sea, &c. &c. And at last, the King of Sheshak, which is Babylon.

He also farther observed, that the visitation of each nation would be at the (end) of seventy years, as Isaiah observes of Tyre ; which was one of the nations. *And it shall come to pass, in that day, that Tyre shall be forgotten seventy years, Isai. xxiii. 15.* The same of Babylon. *And it shall come to pass, when SEVENTY YEARS are accomplished, I will punish the King of*

\* Jerem. xxv. 15, &c.

*Babylon.* Jer. xxv. 12. And as it is also observed in the next verse, *All that is written in this book, which Jeremiah hath prophesied against* ALL THE NATIONS. From whence it is clear, that, as the visitation of Babylon was to be *seventy years*, so was that of all the other nations to be; for so had the wisdom of God decreed to wait, according to this number. For which reason, Daniel judged, that the sins of his nation would likewise be done away by the *seventy years* of the captivity of Babylon. And therefore, the angel informed him, that this was not the case with respect to his nation; for that their wickedness was come up before him, and their sin was very grievous; and therefore, their sins would not be atoned for by the *seventy years*, as the rest of the nations; to whom he allowed *seventy years*, to see if they would repent; and if not, would then punish them.

But, verily, as to Israel, he would not only wait *seventy years*, but *seven times seventy*



*venty years* ; after which, their kingdom should be cut off, and their dominion cease, and they return into captivity, to finish an atonement for their transgressions. And this is the real meaning of שְׁבַעִים שָׁבָעִים *Shavungeem shivungeem* ; *seventy weeks*, i. e. not *seventy years*, as you judged, but *seven times seventy years* is determined on them.

Hence the propriety of the answer to the question, is manifest, as also the expression of *weeks*, or *sevens*.

These seventy weeks are, without doubt, four hundred and ninety years ; the time from the destruction of the first temple, till the destruction of the second.

This, it was the more necessary for the angel to inform him of, because Daniel judged, that after their return from Babylon, by means of that visitation, *all their sins* would be entirely done away ; for which reason, the angel shewed him, that it would not be so ; for that, the visitation of Babylon, was not a *perfect redemption* ; because there would not be a *general*

collection of *all* that were in captivity, and *all the tribes* : save only a few of Judah and Benjamin, and such as fell to them, and those not of the most respectable. And, after their return, they were not free, but were under the dominion of the Persians, Medes, and Greeks ; as also the Romans : and although they at one time threw off their yoke, and had kings of the Asmoneans, and Herodians, yet, was there no king among them of the seed of David ; neither had they the *ark*, with the *cherubim*, and the *shekinah*, or divine presence, which rested thereon ; nor the *Ureem* and *Tumeeen*, nor the *spirit of prophecy*, &c. All which, is a manifestation, that it was not a perfect redemption, but only a visitation, that God was pleased to visit them in, that they were allowed to build a temple to the Lord, *by the permission* of Cyrus, and according to the *measure given by him*. This was, that they might the better be enabled to work their repentance, and make an atonement for their sins ; but, as that

was

was not the case, and they did evil as their fathers, their kingdom was to be cut off, and their dominion cease, after the four hundred and ninety years from the Babylonish captivity. And, this is the real meaning of the word נִכְרַח *Nechtach*; a cutting off, or separation of the people from the holy city.

He also gave him to understand, by the word נִכְרַח *Nechtach*, a separation: that, as in the second vision, which he saw of the morning and evening, and which were of the number of two thousand three hundred; he was not therefore to imagine that they were connected, so as to form a series; or be of one nature, either in captivity, or repentance; or a return to their former honor; but that there should be a cutting off, or separation of seventy weeks from them. And, as this expression was very brief and obscure, he afterwards explained it more at large in the following verses, as will be shewn hereafter.

The first END proposed by the captivity,



is, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make expiation for iniquity. The meaning of this is, that the sins are accounted as an impurity and filthiness; and which is the cause of their removal from their creator; in the same manner, as it is improper to appear before kings or princes in dirty or filthy garments. And, as these filthy spots cannot be removed from off the garments, but by means of washing and scouring of them, so, in like manner, is man to act by his soul. And agreeable to this, says Solomon. *Let thy garments be always WHITE, i. e. clean.* Eccle. ix. 8. And so says the prophet, *Wash ye, make ye clean, put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes.* Isai. i. 16. And the Psalmist says, *Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.* Psal. li. 4. And therefore, afflictions are a necessary consequence in relation to sin, for the cleansing of the soul. But, as repentance does in like manner cleanse and purify the soul from sin,

sin, God doth therefore long defer his anger from the sinner, to give him an opportunity to repent: but if he does not, he receives his punishment. Now, it is manifest, that while the nation of Israel were in possession of the land of Canaan, they were exceedingly wicked and sinful before God; particularly in idolatry, whoredom, shedding of innocent blood, and in abolishing the seventh year of rest\*. For which reason, it was but just, that they should be punished for those crimes; and therefore, when they were carried away captive to Babylon, for the sin of not keeping the sabbath of the land, agreeable to what Moses foretold†; they had also the promise of their return by Jeremiah. *For thus saith the Lord, that after seventy years be accomplished at Babylon, I will visit you, and perform my good words towards you,*

\* Levit. xxy. 4.

† Then shall the land enjoy her sabbath, as long as it lieth desolate, and ye be in your enemy's land, &c. Ibid. xxvi. 34.

*in causing you to return to this place, Jer. xxix. 10.* Hence, it is manifest, that their visitation was to follow that of the punishment of Babylon, as mentioned in Jer. xxv. 12. And which was actually the case: for by the death of Belshazzar, and the ruin of the Babylonian empire which followed, Cyrus coming to the throne of Persia, gave leave to the Jews to return to their own land; this being the sole intent of the promise of Jeremiah. Which return was, that they might repent, in order to merit a perfect redemption. And this is the meaning of the prophet, where he says, *For I know the thoughts that I think towards you, saith the Lord, &c.* Jer. xxix. 11.

These thoughts are not meant of their visitation, or return from Babylon, but the latter redemption by the Messiah. And therefore he says, in the following verses, *Then SHALL YE call upon me, and ye shall go and pray unto me, &c.* This is not a promise, but a command, that they should re-  
pent



pent, and pray unto him ; as the prophet further says, *And ye shall seek me, and find me, WHEN YE SHALL SEARCH FOR ME WITH ALL YOUR HEART. And I will be found of you, saith the Lord, and I will turn away your captivity, and I will gather you from ALL THE NATIONS, and from ALL THE PLACES whether I have driven you, saith the Lord.* This, it is manifest, could not denote their return from Babylon : for that was not from *all places*, and *all nations*.

And that they might obtain this sovereign good, they were commanded to repent, and pray to him. This, perfectly coincides with the words of Moses, that by means of their repentance, God will gather their dispersions. Levit. xxvi. 40, &c.

And, because during the time of the second temple, instead of their repenting, (as they ought to have done) they added to their former sins, by murder, whoredom, injustice, violence, and rapine ; as also by  
the

the heresies of the Sadduces, &c. It was therefore, that this captivity was determined upon them; not for the crimes which they committed during the second temple only, but for *all* they had committed from the time of their first entrance into the land, in the days of Joshua, till the destruction of the first temple, by Nebuchadnezzar; as well as those during the second temple. In the whole, near one thousand three hundred years: during the greatest part of which, they were continually doing evil in the sight of the Lord.

And as for this length of time, in which they had sinned, they were but a few years in Babylon; they consequently were not *cleansed* but of a small part of their sins; and therefore, the Supreme Being had determined, that they should go into a very long captivity, (unless they repented) to receive their punishment, and accomplish their sins, according to what the prophet Jeremiah says. *The punishment of thine iniquity is accomplished, O daughter of Zion.*  
Lament.

Lament. iv. 22. For which reason, the angel made use of the same expression; *for to make an accomplishment of sins, &c.*

I must farther observe, that the angel made use of three different expressions, *לְכַלֵּא. וְלַדָּהִים. וְלַכַּפֵּר* For to finish; and for to make an accomplishment; and for to make an atonement. The reason of which is, that for the sin of not keeping of the sabbatical years, they were punished by the captivity in Babylon; but, for the three great crying sins, viz. idolatry, murder, and whoredom, which they had been guilty of during all the time that they were in the land, they did not receive any punishment for, during the Babylonish captivity, by reason of the shortness of its duration; and therefore, this long captivity was necessary *for to finish the transgression, i. e. IDOLATRY, and for to make an accomplishment for sin; i. e. WHOREDOM, and to make an atonement for iniquity, i. e. MURDER.*

Hence, the first END proposed by the captivity, is clearly explained. And, as the explanation of prophecies, is generally

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very short, or only by indication, the angel judged it sufficient in saying, נִחַתָּד is cut off; indicating thereby, that the kingdom, or government, would be *cut off*, and they *return* into captivity.

The second END proposed is, וְלָהֲבִיא צֶדֶק, עוֹלָמִים *and to bring in everlasting righteousness*. The intent of which expression is, that, as the children of Israel were in Egypt four hundred years, in order that by their miraculous departure from thence, the truth of the existence of the blessed God, his power, and particular providence might be made manifest, as Moses was expressly instructed to say, *To the END thou mayest know THAT I AM THE LORD in the midst of the earth.* Exod. viii. 22. *That thou mayest KNOW that there is NONE LIKE ME in all the earth.* Ibid. ix. 14. Again. *And that my name MAY BE DECLARED THROUGHOUT ALL THE EARTH.* Ibid. xiv. And which manifestation, was perfected by the children of Israel *only*, obtaining the true knowledge of God; so, in  
like

like manner, was it the intent of the Supreme Being, to dignify all mankind, whom he saw plunged into the most confused and erroneous principles, not having the least sense of the truth. And, as it is not to be supposed that the intent of the Supreme Being, in the creation of man, can be frustrated, or vain; as all that he created was for his GLORY. He hath thought proper, according to his superior wisdom, *to shew mankind the way wherein they must walk, and the work that they must do: so that sins shall be consumed out of the earth, and the idols entirely cut off; and that they may all know and understand that the kingdom is the Lord's, and that he is the only Governor among the nations; and that the firm belief of his UNITY may be so unalterably fixed in their hearts, as that they may attain to the end for which they were created. This, is to be obtained by bringing his people low in this long captivity: so that when they are redeemed therefrom, and all the outcasts of Israel are gathered*

together; as also the *resurrection of the dead*, (and which is to follow immediately) all the nations of the earth will, by means thereof, arrive at the true belief of his divinity, and receive his kingly government. And, as this purpose is of the greatest magnitude, as ALL nations are to receive the true knowledge of God, it was consequently necessary, that this captivity should be thus long; because, the means ought to be proportioned to the effect. And, as a captivity of four hundred years in Egypt was necessary, for the nation of the Jews *only*, to arrive at the true knowledge of God, it must consequently be necessary for this captivity to be much longer, as being the means of bringing ALL the nations of the earth to the true faith, agreeable to what the prophet Isaiah says. *And it shall come to pass in THE LAST DAYS, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; AND ALL NATIONS shall flow unto it. And*  
*many*



*many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob, AND HE WILL teach us OF HIS WAYS, AND WE WILL WALK IN HIS PATHS; for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. Isai. ii. 2, 3. And verse 20. In that day a man shall cast away his idols of silver, and his idols of gold, which they made, (each one) for himself to worship, &c. And as he in another place observes, ALL ye inhabitants of the world, and dwellers on the earth, when he lifteth up an ensign on the mountains; and when he bloweth a trumpet, hear ye. Isai. xviii. 3. And the prophet Zephaniah says, For then will I turn to the people a pure language, that they may ALL call upon the name of the Lord, to serve him with one consent. Zeph. iii. 9. These, besides innumerable other passages of scripture, all testify, that by means of the restoration of the Jews, all nations will be brought to the knowledge of the true God. And in this sense it was, that the*  
angel

angel said to Daniel, *to bring in everlasting righteousness*; i. e. the captivity which is determined upon thy people, and upon thy holy city, is, in order to BRING IN EVERLASTING RIGHTEOUSNESS.

The third *end* proposed is, וְלִחְתֹּם חֶזֶן וְנִבְיָא, and to seal the vision and prophecy. Not according to the sense given in the English translation, *to seal up*; i. e. to cease; but quite the reverse: for whereas, before the destruction of the temple, &c. it was the place of the influence of prophecy, and which produced a number of prophets in Israel: yet, after the destruction, as the Psalmist observes, *We see not our signs; THERE IS no more any prophet, &c.* Psal. lxxix. 9. But at the restoration of Israel, the spirit of prophecy will be again restored to them; as the prophet says, *And it shall come to pass afterward, (that) I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophecy, &c.* Joel ii. 28. *And I will shew wonders in the heavens, and in the earth, &c.* Ibid. ii. 30. The meaning

meaning of which is, that in those days the spirit of prophecy being restored to Israel, the prophets will be enabled to work miracles, as aforetime. This is the intent of the expression *to seal the prophecy*; i. e. the prophecies will be then publickly authenticated; as if *sealed with the seal of God*.

He also thereby alluded to this long captivity, as the means of perfecting all the prophecies foretold, concerning the captivity of the nation; their redemption, and the resurrection of their dead; as the sole end and purpose of all the prophecies; and which being accomplished, the spirit of prophecy will *again* return to the nation, as heretofore.

The fourth end proposed is *לְמַשֵּׁחַ קֹדֶשׁ קְדָשִׁים* and to anoint the Holy of Holies. As to the Holy of Holies, that is explained in the law\*, to denote the most holy place; and, as in the second temple, the Holy of Holies was not anointed, (as the oil

\* Exod. xxvi. 33. &c,



was not to be found) and which was the cause, that the Shechinah, (or divine presence) which was manifested by a visible cloud resting over the mercy seat\*, was wanting in the second temple.

And the want of this, so necessary to the Holy of Holies, is allowed even by a Christian author of great note§; (who, it is to be presumed, cannot be suspected of favoring my hypothesis) who, speaking of the things wanting in the second temple, observes of the anointing oil, “ But this (the oil) being wanting in  
“ the second temple, the want thereof  
“ caused a want of sanctity in all things  
“ else belonging to it.” The angel, therefore, informs him, that at the time of their redemption, and appearance of the true Messiah, the anointing oil, which was concealed, or destroyed, at the destruction of the first temple, will be again restored to them; and with which, they will then

\* Levit. xvi. 2, &c.

§ Dr. Prideaux. Dr. Connect. Vol. I. page 193.

anoint the Holy of Holies, as a peculiar mark of its being chosen by God; as also of its duration: and which was the reason that the second temple was not anointed; to shew, that its duration was not to be eternal, as that mentioned by Ezekiel \*; and which is to be according to the pattern shewn to that prophet.

Hence it is clear, that the angel in general terms informed him, that, as in the Babylonish captivity, and also during the second temple, they would not be cleansed of their manifold sins; they were therefore, after these seventy weeks, which were determined upon them, (unless they sincerely repented) to go into captivity, to finish transgression, &c. *and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most holy.*

And, after the angel had thus expressed himself in general terms, he descended to particulars; and for which, he laid down four propositions, (if I may be allowed the

\* Ezek. xliii. 10, &c.

term) or periods. First, *Know therefore and understand, (that) from the going forth of the commandment, to restore and to build Jerusalem, unto the ANOINTED PRINCE, (shall be) SEVEN WEEKS.*

I have already observed\*, that the vision of the seventy weeks, was in order to remove the doubt which Daniel had entertained of the prophecies of Jeremiah, concerning the visitation: the angel therefore informed him, that the case was the reverse of what he thought; and that so far from prolonging it, God would, on the contrary, hasten it; and that, at the end of seven weeks, or forty-nine years: for so long was it from the destruction of the first temple, till Cyrus†, who was THE ANOINTED PRINCE, gave leave to build the second.

Second, *And threescore and two weeks the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times.* Herewith he gave him

\* Page 36. † "Thus saith the Lord to his anointed,  
"to Cyrus." Isai. xlv. 1.



to understand, that after the seven weeks before mentioned, there would come a time in which the building would be hindered ; and which was on account of the letter written by Rehum and Shimshai to Artaxerxes ; and who, in consequence thereof, made the building cease, till the second year of the reign of Darius, who gave leave to finish the building ; and which, after being finished, continued till the coming of the Romans, sixty-two weeks, beside the last week, at the beginning of which, the Romans came and warred against them : and at length intirely destroyed the cities of Judah, Jerusalem, the temple, &c. For from the time that Cyrus first gave leave to build the temple, till its completion, was twenty-one years ; and its duration, four hundred and twenty ; in the whole sixty-three weeks, or four hundred and forty-one years : but the angel made his division at sixty-two weeks ; as he afterwards described what was to come to pass in the last week. And by the word תשוב it shall

return, he alluded to the leave given by Darius, *to return to the building again.* At which time, the seventy years of the captivity of Babylon were accomplished.

And by the words, *in troublous times*, he informed him, that, during the building the temple, they would have continual trouble, and alarms from their enemies; as mentioned in Ezra. And in Nehem. iv. 16. we find, that while one half of them wrought in the work, the other half were obliged to hold *the spears, the shields, &c.* And even after the finishing of it, they would frequently be troubled, and persecuted; and which was really the case; as may be observed of the troubles, and persecutions they underwent from both Greeks, and Romans: not to mention their intestine troubles. All which plainly shews, that it was not a thorough redemption.

Third, *And after threescore and two weeks shall THE ANOINTED be cut off, AND NOT TO HIM: and the city and sanctuary shall be destroyed (by) the people of the prince that shall come, &c.* The

*The anointed* \* here mentioned was King Agrippa†, who was put to death by Vespasian about

\* The word מָשִׁיחַ denotes the anointed : and who can be properly called so, but the King. *Who was the Lord's anointed?* as David expressed himself, in regard to Saul ; *For who can stretch forth his hand against the Lord's* ANOINTED. 1 Sam. xxvi. 9. And the reason that the King was so called is, because he was anointed at the express command of God, by the hand of the prophet. But this can in no wise be applied to Jesus ; who, after all my researches, I cannot find, was anointed by any prophet, or other person, except the woman pouring ointment on his head, may be so called. See Mark xiv. 3.

† As to what you observe, page 37, of a spurious Josephus, I must take the liberty to set you right, by informing you, that the work, called Josephoen Ben Gorian, was written by the true Josephus, and who wrote his Josephus to the Romans, in Greek ; and the other, (which you call spurious) to the Jews, in Hebrew. As to the cause of its not being heard of before the twelfth century, I can easily account for : for being written in Hebrew, the Christians, who before that period knew very little of the sacred language, were not able to read it ; but that there were *authentic* copies of it among the Jews, is not to be doubted, as Rabbi *Tham* observes. And what is with me a great proof of its authenticity, is the contradictions of the Christian historians about it ; for Basnage, who is the most considerable of them, in his great zeal to decry it, has fell into a most egregious blunder. He first observes, " That Joseph, the historian, the son of Gorian, is one of the " Doctors that France brought forth in the ELEVENTH " CENTURY."



about four years before the destruction of the temple: as was also his son: and which is shewn by the words לֹא יִהְיֶה and not to him, *i. e.* there shall be no more of him: for after his death, there was no more kingly power to the Jewish nation to this day. And why? because *the city and sanctuary shall be destroyed (by) the people of the prince that shall come; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined.* All which, was fully accomplished under Titus, who commanded them to demolish the walls, the houses, &c.

And, after having mentioned the particulars of the sixty-nine weeks, *viz.* the first seven, and the sixty-two; he proceeds

“CENTURY.” And, a little farther he observes, “That the book was known to Saadiah, one of the Excellent of the TENTH CENTURY.” [Basnage’s History of the Jews, page 610, 611.] After such a gross mistake as this, I think very little credit ought to be given to the accounts of Christian historians concerning this book; especially, as learned men (and you also) allow that a spurious passage has been fostered into what you are pleased to call the *true* Josephus.

to the last week of the seventy; וְהַגְבִּיר בְּדִית And he shall STRENGTHEN the covenant with many one week. This is spoken of the prince, mentioned in the preceding verse, and who coming at the beginning of the last week, was continually offering peace to the Jews, according to the emperor's desire; and therefore, the angel made use of the verb וְהַגְבִּיר and he shall strengthen: *i. e.* he shall endeavor to strengthen the covenant, that was between them: and for that reason, he did not say that he should *make* a covenant with them; but only to strengthen the former one.

And as to the expression, *And in the midst (or half) of the week (i. e. the seventieth) he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease.* The prediction was fully verified; for on account of the great troubles of the siege, the sacrifice, and the offering, ceased from the temple, three years and a half before its destruction. And he farther observes, that all this was to come  
upon

upon them, for the overspreading of the abominations, it should be made desolate: i. e. the abominations which they had committed, during both the first and second temples. Hence the answer to Daniel's doubt was complete; and which was to inform him, that the visitation of the Babylonian captivity was not prolonged, but rather hastened; but that, if they should not repent and mend their ways, they would after the period allowed them, go into a long captivity, to expiate their former transgressions, &c.

This, is what appears to me; and I doubt not, to every impartial, and candid person also, when duly considered, as perfectly conformable to the whole context, beginning from the second verse of the chapter. *In the first year of his reign, I Daniel understood by books the number of years, whereof the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah the prophet, that he would accomplish SEVENTY YEARS in the desolation of Jerusalem.* Hence, according to the explanation  
here



here given, it is manifest, that the answer was perfectly calculated to remove his doubt; and which was all that was intended by it. But if you, or any other Christian, should think proper to dispute the sense here given, I mean then, to take a review of all the explanations given by the Christian commentators: and I pledge myself to produce such unsurmountable objections to their different systems, as will clearly point out the fallacy of them, and firmly fix the truth of mine.

As to what you object against Rabbi Isaac, " that from the destruction of the  
 " temple, by Nebuchadnezzar, to that  
 " by Titus, was a period of more than  
 " 650 years," is, I presume, not according to scripture; but, on the contrary, is founded on the opinion embraced by Christian writers, from prophane authors; who hold, that from Cyrus, King of Persia, till Darius, who was conquered by Alexander, there were fourteen Kings. But, this is directly contrary to scripture; for

in the vision which he saw, (chap. x. xi.) the angel informed him, that there was to be three kings more in Persia, besides Cyrus; in the third year of whose reign, he saw the vision; which plainly shews, that there were to be but four kings in all, viz. Cyrus, his son Cambyfes, Ahfuerus, the husband of Esther, and Darius, called in scripture Artaxerxes.

I am, &c.

## L E T T E R II.

*Of the divine Mission of CHRIST, compared  
with that of MOSES.*

DEAR SIR,

YOU are pleased to tell us, (page 18, of your letters) “ That our ancestors  
“ rejected those who came from God, [I  
“ suppose you mean Christ and the  
“ apostles]

“ apostles] and who brought the same testimony of a divine mission that Moses, and the preceding prophets, brought before them;” i. e. the working of miracles.

All this is easily asserted, but not proved: for, in my humble opinion, you ought to have proved; first, that the miracles which Moses wrought, were the *especial* proof of his divine mission: and, second, that those which Jesus wrought, were in like manner such, as no human being could work without the immediate assistance of God; and that there was also the same necessity for their being performed. But as you have thought not proper to proceed in this fair manner, I mean to take the task upon myself; and shall, therefore, in the first place prove, that Moses was not believed by the Jewish nation merely for the miracles which he wrought, (although there was the greatest necessity for them) and secondly, that there was not only no such necessity for those of Jesus, but that

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they



they were scarcely *just* or *rational*; and consequently, cannot be offered as proofs of his divine mission, in comparison of that of Moses.

As to the miracles of Moses, there was the greatest necessity for them. For instance, the plagues he brought upon the Egyptians, was necessary for the redemption of the Jewish nation; as was the dividing of the Red sea, and the drowning of the Egyptians, for their farther deliverance from them. The manna from heaven, and the water from the rock, were necessary for their subsistence in the wilderness: the same of all the rest.

And, although they were performed in the sight of both the Jewish and Egyptian nations, yet were they only preparatory to that, which was to fix their firm belief in the divine mission of Moses, viz. God speaking with Moses face to face, in the presence of SIX HUNDRED THOUSAND MEN, besides women and children; as mentioned in Exodus, chap. xix. 9. *And the Lord*

*Lord said unto Moses, Lo, I come unto thee in a thick cloud, that the people may hear when I speak with thee, AND BELIEVE THEE FOR EVER,*

This, Sir, was the *especial* proof of the divine mission of Moses: and indeed, a greater cannot be required, as Moses himself emphatically expresses it, *For ask now of the days that are past, which were before thee, since the day that God created man upon the earth, and (ask) from one side of the heaven unto the other, whether there hath been (any such thing) as this great thing is, or hath been heard like it? Did (ever) people hear the voice of God speaking out of the midst of fire, as thou hast heard? Deut. iv. 32, 33.* And it is this that God meant by the expression, *And this (shall be) a sign unto thee, THAT I HAVE SENT THEE: when thou hast brought forth the people out of Egypt, ye shall serve God upon this mountain. Exod. iii. 12.*

For this was the *essential* proof of the divine mission of Moses, because, they not  
only

only heard God speak to Moses, but to themselves also ; and by which, they were fully satisfied of the *existence of the spirit of prophecy*, as we find they expressed themselves, *And we have heard his voice out of the midst of the fire : we have seen this day THAT GOD DOTH TALK WITH MAN, and he liveth.* Deut. v. 24.

And what is still a greater proof of his divine mission, and that the nation were fully convinced thereof, is, that they from thenceforward, agreed to receive, as coming from God, whatever he should deliver to them ; because, they then were fully satisfied of his mission. Hear their own words. *Now therefore why should we die ? for this great fire will consume us. If we continue to hear the voice of the Lord our God any more, then we shall die. For who (is there of) all flesh that hath heard the voice of the living God, speaking out of the midst of the fire, as we (have) and lived ? Go thou near, and hear all that the Lord our God shall say, and speak thou unto us ALL, that the Lord*  
our



*our God shall speak unto thee, AND WE WILL HEAR (it,) AND DO (it).* Ibid. 25, 26, 27. and Exod. xv. 19.

And, as it was by such extraordinary means, that they came to entertain a firm belief in his divine mission, it hath *never* been effaced from the Jewish nation: for notwithstanding, that they fell into idolatry and other crimes, yet, at no time whatever did the nation *deny* the divine mission of Moses. No, Sir, not the destruction of our government, and the consequent dispersion of our nation; the persecutions of Infidels and Christians, and the almost universal contempt of nations, have ever been able to root it out of our hearts.

Hence it is manifest, from the words of God himself, (and who, we must grant, was fully acquainted with the sentiments of the nation) that miracles *only* were not sufficient to establish a firm belief in the divine mission of Moses; much less can those of Jesus, and which you freely acknowledge, cannot vie with those recorded  
of

of Moses, in point of *magnitude and splendor*, be thought so : more especially, if we consider the strong injunctions laid on us by Moses, not to add or diminish from the law. *Ye shall not ADD unto the word, which I command you, neither shall ye DIMINISH (ought) from it.* Deut. iv. 2. and xii. 3. Whereas, Christians hold, that Jesus had power to abolish the Mosaical dispensation, and which say they he actually did. And although you, and some other Christians, believe the perpetual obligation of the law of Moses ; yet, I suppose, that a person of your knowledge and experience need not be informed, that, that is not the sentiments of Christians in general ; and this, leads me to consider your attempt to convert the Jews, to what *you call Christianity*, as both preposterous, and useless. Preposterous ; because you must be sensible, that to convert a nation, such as the Jews, to Christianity, the professors thereof ought to be unanimous, in what the work of salvation consists ; (otherwise, they might be

be deterred therefrom, by reason of the difficulty attending the making a proper choice of that which is right) that this is not the case with what is called Christianity, I submit to the judgment of every candid and impartial person. For, if we go to the *Catholic church*, we are told, that out of the pale thereof, there is no salvation; and consequently, must submit to believe, *transubstantiation*; the worshipping or praying to saints and images, with a whole train of *et ceteras*, or go to the devil. And, although the reformed churches, (with the whole body of dissenters) are more charitable; yet, unless a person firmly believes the doctrine of the *Trinity*, and the merits of the *blood* and suffering of Christ, as the *Messiah* and *Saviour* of the world, there is no salvation for him. Nay, even you yourself, and those that are of your opinion, are not considered as Christians, by those that account themselves orthodox; as I understand, from both clergy and laity, with whom I have conversed. And what

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is more, you are included in the same condemnation as the Jews, for not believing in the doctrine of the Trinity; as I perceive by the following paragraph, and which Mr. Lindsey, in his "Sequel to the Apology for resigning the vicarage of Catterick," observes, that it is taken from page 30, of an "Answer to the Rev. Mr. Romaine's Practical Commentary on the one hundred and seventh Psalm."

As I am not possessed of either the Commentary, or Answer; I shall give it in Mr. Lindsey's own words. "In page 100,  
 " we meet with a surprising accusation  
 " against the Jews, that they are now  
 " without a God, because they have re-  
 " jected the true God, the blessed Trinity  
 " of their fathers, and worship they know  
 " not what. They have set up some  
 " strange kind of an infinitely extended  
 " metaphysical Being, whom they call the  
 " one supreme God, and who never had  
 " any existence, but what the enemies of  
 " Christianity have been pleased to give  
 " him."

“ him.” Romaine’s Practical Commentary.  
 “ This is a new description of atheism. To  
 “ believe in ONE supreme God, is with ig-  
 “ norant zeal asserted to be the same thing  
 “ as to be without a God.” But I ask, (in  
 the words of Mr. Lindsey) what is *atheism*,  
 or what is *blasphemy*, if denying the existence  
 of ONE supreme God be not? And may not  
 I say, in vindication of the Jews, against  
 this malevolent charge, that if they worship  
 ONE supreme God, they do worship the  
 God of their fathers? Do they not wor-  
 ship the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and  
 of Jacob, in whom they believed? The  
 God of Moses, to whom he declared him-  
 self by the name I AM? The God de-  
 scribed in the law and the prophets, as THE  
 ONLY LIVING AND TRUE GOD. And my  
 author farther observes, “ But the au-  
 “ thor’s zeal cannot stop here. Christians  
 “ are *included* in the same condemnation  
 “ with the Jews, if they do not assent to  
 “ this new\* article of his own invented  
 “ creed.”

\* If I understand my author rightly, I must differ from  
 L 2 him

“ creed.” Sequel to the Apology. Page 226.

And can you imagine, that a whole nation would forsake a religion given by God himself, for such manifest contradictory opinions ; and which, according to your doctrine, are *both* far from true Christianity ? Where is the poor Jew now to choose ? Why he is in a worse plight than the idolatrous Jews in the time of Ahab, for they halted between two opinions only, as Elijah told them ; (1 Kings xviii. 21.) but here are *three*. Am I not now justified in calling your attempt preposterous ? But perhaps you will tell me, that what you profess is right, and that “ you believe “ in the perpetual obligation of ALL the “ laws which Moses prescribed to our “ nation.” (page 5 of your letters) If so, I at once pronounce your attempt to be nugatory. For can we do more by em-

him in this ; for I always understood, that the self-existence, and equality of Christ with the Father, &c. was always held by the Trinitarians ; consequently, it cannot be a *new-invented* article.

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bracing Christianity, than adhere to the law of Moses, even according to your hypothesis? surely not.

But notwithstanding your opinion, and that of your sect, (which are but a handful) Christians in general hold, that on the preaching of the gospel, the abolishment of the Mosaical dispensation took place. And it is on this ground, that we are to consider the divine mission of Christ. Now, as the divine mission of Moses by God's speaking to him face to face, as before observed, is clearly proved; and as God had strictly enjoined us by Moses not TO ADD, or DIMINISH from the law so given by him, what must we think of one who by his doctrine abrogated it? Ephes. ii. 15. Romans vii. 6. Gal. iii. 24, 25. and Heb. x. 1. &c. In my humble opinion, I think it is clear, that he could not be sent by God, as God never contradicts himself.

As to the miracles of Jesus; I have observed, they were scarcely *just* or *rational*. I shall at present take notice of but one  
or

or two, viz. 1: His driving of the devils out of the two men possessed, and sending them into the herd of swine. Matt. viii.

28. This, I think, was not strictly just; for, as (according to your opinion) he was but a man, and a prophet, I would willingly be informed, what right he had to destroy another person's property, in the manner he did, by sending the devils into them, and so causing them to run violently into the sea and perish?

2. His cursing the fig-tree for not bearing fruit out of season. Mark xi. 13. This I conceive to be neither rational, or just. For, in the first place, the text says, *And when he came to it, he found nothing but*  
 X *leaves; for the time of figs was not YET.* Hence it is manifest, that he required the tree to produce fruit out of season, and which would have been contrary to the intent of its creator; and therefore, he, as a dutiful son, curses the innocent and guiltless tree, for doing that which his father had commanded it to do, viz. to bear fruit

*The meaning is, the time for gathering them was not yet - it was reasonable*

fruit in its proper season. If after this, Christians should still persist in the miracle, according to the *letter* of the story, much good may it do them: but I am sure, it will never be the means of converting the unbelieving Jews to the Christian faith.

But had Jesus, on the contrary, as (St. Augustin somewhere observes) instead of cursing the fig-tree, have made a dry, dead, or withered one immediately to bud, flourish, and presently to bring forth fruit out of season, as we find recorded by Moses, who, taking a rod of each tribe, by the command of God, laid them up *in the tabernacle of witness*, in order to prove thereby, whom it was that he was pleased to make choice of for the priesthood, we find, *And it came to pass, that on the morrow, Moses went into the tabernacle of witness: and behold, the ROD of Aaron, for the house of Levi was BUDDED, AND BROUGHT FORTH BUDS, AND BLOOMED BLOSSOMS, AND YIELDED ALMONDS.* Numb. xvii. 8. Had  
Jesus



Jesus acted in this manner, it would have been such an instance of his power, as to have rendered the proof of the miracle indisputable; though not of sufficient authority to prove his divine mission, as above shewn by Moses.

But, Sir, I have yet something farther to object against this miracle, and which affects the credibility of the history thereof. For in Matthew xxi. it appears, that he first cast out the buyers and sellers out of the temple; and on the morrow cursed the fig-tree; whereas, according to Mark xi. it is clear, that it was transacted before the driving of them out of the temple. Such a manifest contradiction, in inspired writers, (and who, according to your opinion, were well acquainted with the facts about which they wrote) I think, must greatly hurt the credibility of the history; which you so strenuously recommend us to peruse.

And I am confident, that there are a number of others as glaring as this; but  
which,

which, I have not at present, either time or inclination to point out. I cannot, however, pass by the following, without taking notice of it; if it is only that Christians in general (Trinitarians, as well as Unitarians) may turn their thoughts towards it, in order to give a satisfactory answer thereto. It is as follows:

The Evangelist, St. Matthew, in the first chapter of his gospel, gives us the genealogy of Christ; and Luke, in the third chapter of his gospel, does the same; but with such difference, that an unprejudiced person, would hardly think, they belonged to one and the same person; for the latter not only differs from the former, in almost the whole genealogy from Joseph to David, but has also added a few more generations; and likewise made Jesus to descend from *Nathan*, the son of David, instead of *Solomon*.

And you will also please to observe, that they are not only contradictory to each other, but are inconsistent with themselves: for

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what can be more so than Matthew i. 18, with Matthew xiii. 55. or than Luke i. 34, 35. and Luke xiv. 22.

Perhaps you will tell me, in the language of a certain writer of your sect, who, in confuting the *Trinitarian*, *Arian*, and *Socinian* systems, concerning the miraculous conception of Jesus, observes, (in speaking to the Jews) “ All such portions  
“ of the present established canon of the  
“ Christian scriptures, respecting Jesus as  
“ your Messiah, which *expressly* militate  
“ against the description of him as fore-  
“ told in your divine prophetic writings,  
“ you are bound to reject as SPURIOUS.”  
Call to the Jews, page 87.

Now, if Christians themselves allow that *part* of their gospels are *spurious*, how are we *sure*, that the remainder is authentic: and do you call such writings as these “ the proper or historical evidence  
“ for the miracles of Christ,” and which you say (page 54 of your letters) “ is of the  
“ very same kind with that of Moses?”

I defy



I defy you, or any other, to prove such gross contradictions in the history of Moses. If you cannot, (and I am confident, that it is not in your power) you must then allow the superiority of Moses's divine mission: and which is all that I contend for at present.

Hence, I think, I have clearly proved, what I above proposed, viz. that miracles only are not a sufficient proof of a divine mission: that they were not the *especial proof* of that of Moses: and that there was not only no such necessity for those which Jesus wrought, but that they were barely just or rational. I shall now produce the words of Moses himself, to shew, that miracles *only*, are *not* a sufficient proof of a divine mission; for he hath told us so, in as plain and intelligent language, as it is possible for tongue to express. *If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth you A SIGN or A WONDER. And the sign or wonder COME TO PASS whereof he spake unto thee, saying, Let us go after other*

*gods which thou hast not known, and let us serve them: thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams: for the Lord your God PROVETH YOU, to know whether ye love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul. Deut. xiii. 1, 2, 3.*

And now, Sir, I must take the liberty to ask you, what you think of miracles, as a proof of a divine mission, after such clear and unequivocal language as this? I am sure, if you are that sincere lover of truth that you profess to be, you must certainly abandon it as untenable.

And let me tell you, Sir, that in this admonition, you have a full answer to what you have advanced, page 20, of your letters, “ If God could permit Christ to  
 “ impose upon your nation, and the world,  
 “ in this manner, he might have suffered  
 “ Moses to do the same, and there could  
 “ be no guard against the grossest impos-  
 “ tures.” Now, if miracles only had been a proof of a divine mission, your observation  
 would

would have been just ; and I would have been as willing as any one to have allowed the force thereof ; but, on the contrary, (as I have demonstrated) miracles were *not* deemed sufficient even by God himself, as may be observed from the preceding texts. And by *this*, he expressly warns us from being imposed upon by what are called miracles ; as well knowing, that there should arise such, as would attempt to impose upon us by working pretended miracles ; and therefore, strictly commands us to put that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams, to death. Ibid. verse 5.

I have but one thing more at present to observe, in behalf of the divine mission of Moses ; and which fully demonstrates, that it was from God, is, the prosperity (though temporal\*, and which the Supreme Being

\* In a Commentary that I propose to write on the Old Testament, (God willing) I mean to prove, that Moses inculcated the doctrine of a future state in his dispensation, notwithstanding what Christians have advanced to the contrary : but as that is foreign to my purpose, I shall take no farther notice of it at present.

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knew was then best adapted to make an impression on them, and show his PARTICULAR PROVIDENCE in the government of mankind) which he promises them, as the reward of their obedience; and the dreadful calamities which he denounces against them, in case of their disobedience: all which, have been literally fulfilled to this day, by a most wonderful series of events.

Before I close this letter, I must take notice of what you call the true prophetic spirit of Christ. In page 19, you tell us, "As a true prophet, Christ foretold the dreadful calamities that befel your nation in that generation." And quote as a proof thereof, Luke xix. 41. But this, Sir, is no proof of his prophetic spirit: for if duly considered, you will clearly perceive, that it is neither more or less, than the vision which the angel had shewn unto Daniel, concerning the destruction of the city and the sanctuary, as recorded in the twenty-sixth and twenty-seventh verses of the ninth chapter of Daniel; and which,

which, at that time, was well known to all the learned Jews: and do you think that Jesus, who appears to be well acquainted with scripture, should be ignorant of it? This, I think, can by no means be supposed; but, on the contrary, it seems he was well acquainted with it, as appears from his quoting part of it. See Matt. xxiv. 15. Mark xiii. 14. Consequently, it cannot be produced, as a proof of his prophetic spirit.

But if you are desirous of a proof of his prophetic spirit, I will just mention one, and leave you to judge of it. It is as follows: *Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming in which ALL that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth, they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.* John v. 28.

Now, if this is not an imitation of the prophecy of Daniel concerning the resurrection, as recorded in chap. xii. 3. (only in a little rougher language than what he made use of) I do not know what  
is;

is; but with this distinction, that the prophet speaks of a future time; whereas Jesus speaks of it as near at hand; although a period of upwards of seventeen hundred years have elapsed since that time.

I must now take notice of another expression, recorded by John in the same chapter, verse 39. *And the Father himself which hath sent me, hath borne witness of me;* YE HAVE NEITHER HEARD HIS VOICE AT ANY TIME. Pray, Sir, what do you think of this expression; and which is so contrary to what both Jews and Christians believe, viz. That God spake to the Jewish nation face to face, as recorded by Moses. Now I think it is clear, that you must grant, either that Moses spake truth, and the expression of Christ was false; or that Christ spake truth, and Moses false; and that the whole nation were deluded in such a manner, as not to believe their own eyes, or ears. Take your choice; but I caution you to beware how you choose; for if you should prefer Christ, you will then stand on a very tottering



tottering foundation; because, Christ appeals to those very scriptures, (which, according to the rule here laid down must then be false,) as those that testify of him.

And this leads me to consider what you have advanced, page 29. “ Had Jesus  
 “ been an impostor, like others, by whom  
 “ you have been imposed upon since.”  
 Now the love of truth obliges me to tell you plainly, that according to your hypothesis, Jesus must be that impostor. Hear the words of a reverend and dignified clergyman of the church of England, and attentively consider the shocking alternative that he has put the character of Jesus upon. They are not my words: I am not accountable for them: Christians themselves must look to it; for it is they that give infidels cause to triumph. “ Either our  
 “ Lord was more than a mere man, or  
 “ even than a mere angel: nay, either he is  
 “ that great I AM, which had an existence, not only before Abraham, but before the world began, and upholds all  
 N “ things

“ things by the word of his power, or else  
 “ *he must have been one of the falsest and*  
 “ *vilest of the human race*, for making such  
 “ groundless pretensions.” And a little  
 farther, “ That, if this system\* be really  
 “ true, the scriptures of course must be  
 “ false, and Christ and his apostles be  
 “ ranked among the greatest hypocrites  
 “ and impostors that ever appeared on  
 “ earth.” See A brief and dispassionate View  
 of the Difficulties attending the Trinitarian,  
 Arian, and Socinian systems, page 12, by  
 Josiah Tucker, D. D. Dean of Gloucester,  
 1774, price 3d.

I must now ask you once more, whether  
 this is the religion, that you, with so much  
 sincerity and good will, invite the Jews to  
 embrace? Were it not that charity forbids  
 my entertaining such a thought, I should  
 be apt to pronounce the whole a farce.  
 But if you are really in earnest, and wish  
 to convert the Jews, to what you call  
 Christianity, I think you must produce

\* The Unitarian.

more substantial proofs in support of your hypothesis, than what you have yet done. And, if I might presume to offer my opinion in so weighty a cause, I think, that the fairest method, and that which is the likeliest to lead to conviction on either side, is, to take a review of all the prophecies concerning the Messiah, from Moses to Malachi; and compare them with the acts of Jesus, recorded in the New Testament; to see, whether or no they have been fulfilled in his person. This, is the method I took myself to search for truth: for I am not ashamed to tell you, that I am *a Jew* by choice; and not because I was born a Jew: far from it: for I am clearly of opinion, that every person endowed with ratiocination, ought to have a clear idea of the truth of revelation, and a true ground for his faith; as far as human wisdom can go.

And it is this, that David meant in his charge to Solomon. *And thou, Solomon, my son, KNOW the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart.* 1 Chron. xxviii. 9.



Now, it is not possible for any one to know God: but what David meant thereby was, that he should not do as the heathens did, who inherited their religion from father to son, without having any true grounds for their faith. No, says he, thou shalt not do so, but *עך* *understand* by thy sense and reason, that, the God of thy father, is alone worthy to be served; and then, as a natural consequence, thou wilt serve him with a perfect heart. For it is manifest, that he who hath searched, and found just ground for the truth of his faith, will always serve God with a more fervent devotion, than he who receives his religion, as he does his inheritance.

If the scheme above proposed was to be pursued, I think we should soon come to a decision: for it is not the name of Messiah, but the character of the person foretold by the prophets, that is to be regarded, (as you also acknowledge, page 39) and the events to be accomplished at his coming.

If all the prophecies have been fulfilled  
in

in Jesus, he must be the person foretold; if not, (and which, I am pretty confident of I can prove) why then, he cannot be the person prophesied of. Hence it is manifest, that this is the only rational method, to be pursued in a controversy of this kind: we should then see, whether we have really fell into the mistake (as you assert, page 38) of not distinguishing between a *suffering Messiah*, and that *Prince of the house of David*, under whom we are to enjoy the great prosperity that is promised to us *in the latter days*. For as you observe, (page 39) “ the “ Messiah we look for will come.”

Now, I should be highly obliged to you, if you will point out to me those texts of scripture which distinguish the one from the other. For I must freely acknowledge, that notwithstanding I have frequently read the Bible in the original language, in which I have some little knowledge; yet, have I not been fortunate enough to meet with them. Perhaps, my eyes were *bolden*, that I should not see them; and you are  
ordained

ordained to open them. If so, I beseech you to be expeditious ; for salvation is a work, that I hold, cannot be perfected too soon. But I sincerely hope, that they are better founded than what you advance, (page 39) “ But it is no where said that “ the person who is characterised by the “ title of *Messiah*, should be descended “ from David, but only that *prince* under “ whom you are to enjoy your temporal “ prosperity.”

This distinction of yours, I must tell you sincerely, is truly fallacious : for no such distinction is to be met with in the *Hebrew* language : and the word מָשִׁיחַ in that language, denotes no more, than simply *the anointed* ; and which is used to *the King*, or *High Priest* ; it also denotes *to anoint*, &c. But is never used to denote the person, denominated the *Messiah* ; for that has only obtained, by means of the *Chaldee* paraphrasts ; who, in translating those words in scripture, that denoted *the prince*, under whom we are to enjoy our temporal prosperity,



perity, rendered them into Chaldee מָשִׁיחַ *the anointed*; because, the said prince is every where described, as descending from David, and consequently, will be *the anointed king* that is to reign over the Jewish nation, after their restoration. Hence, you may clearly perceive, from what source the word *Messiah* arose, and that the person so denominated, and the *prince* under whom we are to enjoy our prosperity (according to your hypothesis) are one and the same person; consequently, the distinction used by you, is a mere fallacy.

And that you may be fully convinced of the truth of what I have advanced, I will give you an instance or two (out of the many that I could produce) in support of it; for I scorn to assert, what I cannot prove.

*And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots.* Isai. xi. 1.

The Cha.

וַיֵּצֵא מֶלֶךְ מִבְּנוֹתַי דָּוִד וּמִשִּׁיחָא מִבְּנֵי בְנוֹתַי יִתְרֵי

And there shall come forth a KING from  
the

the children of Jesse, and a MESSIAH from his childrens children shall grow: Targum, Jonathan. Ibid.

Again.

*The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid, &c. Ibid. 6.*

The Cha.

בְּיוֹמוֹתַי דְּמָשִׁיחָא דִּישְׂרָאֵל יִסְגִּי שְׁלָמָא בְּאַרְעָא וְיִדּוּר  
יִיבָא עִם אִמְרָא וְנִמְרָא עִם גִּדְיָא In the days of the  
MESSIAH of Israel, peace shall be great *in*  
*the earth*, and the wolf shall dwell with the  
lamb, and the leopard with the kid. Tar-  
gum, Jonathan, Ibid.

These, Sir, are clear and unequivocal passages ; and which both Jews and Christians apply to the Messiah : although, the latter, are rather hard drove, to make this description of the *Messiah* agree with the character of Jesus ; and therefore explain it away, as denoting spiritual peace, &c. But you see that, the *Chaldee* paraphrast (and of whom Christians\* tell us they can make such great

\* Prideaux Connect. Vol. IV. Book VIII. page  
187 and 191. Edinburgh Edition.

use of, in their arguments against the Jews) is clearly against that sense, for he says, " peace shall be great *in the earth*;" consequently it must be temporal.

Again. *And thou, O tower of the flock.* Micah iv. 8.

The Cha.

וְאַתָּה מְשִׁיחָא דִּישְׂרָאֵל And thou, the MESSIAH of Israel. Targum Jonathan. Ibid.

I shall produce but one more at present, which is as follows: *But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, (though) thou be little among the thousands of Judah, (yet) out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel.* Micah v. 2.

The Cha.

וְאַתָּה בֵּית לָחֶם אֶפְרַתָּה כְּזֶעַר הָיִיתָ לְאַתָּה מִמֵּנָהּ בְּאַלְפֵי דְבֵית יְהוּדָה מִנֶּגֶד קִרְמֵי יִפּוֹק מְשִׁיחָא לְמַהְיֵי עֶבֶד שׁוֹלֵטֵן עַל יִשְׂרָאֵל. And thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, as little as thou wast to be numbered among the thousands of Judah, (yet) out of thee shall come forth the MESSIAH, who is TO BEAR RULE OVER ISRAEL. Targum Jonathan. Ibid.

Q

This,



This, Sir, I take to be decisive against your hypothesis : because, the character of the *Messiah* or *Prince*, is so clearly depicted, that whoever runs may read : and both Jews and Christians apply it to the person called the *Messiah*. Hence it is manifest, that the person called the *Messiah* or *Christ* by the Christians; a *Prophet* by you; and a *temporal Prince* to bear rule over us, according to our (and your) opinion, is, one and the same person. Which of the three, hath the justest claim to the character, as also whether it was fulfilled in either of the two first characters, is another point to be discussed; and which at present is foreign to the purpose. I could produce more examples in support of what I have advanced, but these I think, are sufficient to convince a philosopher of such candid and liberal sentiments, as you are known to possess, in so eminent a degree. I therefore, have no doubt, but that you will either retract what you have advanced on this point, or support it by substantial proofs; either of which

which, I shall be happy to see. With the  
highest sentiments of sincerity and respect,  
I remain,

SIR,

Your's, &c.

D. L E V I.

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